



Regional Service Council Minutes

Region # 16

Meeting Date: July 26, 2007
Meeting Location: Haub Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana

Council Members Present: Regional Manager Virginia Combs
Larry Marchino
Susan Blackburn
Steve Cunningham
Katrina Russell (for David Straw)
Julie Weeks
Judge Timothy Crowley
Judge Brett Niemeier
Chris Hoehn
Suzanne Draper
Judge David Kelley

Council Members Absent: David Straw

Others In Attendance: Judge James Redwine
Judith Harper
Dr. John Ireland (Ireland & Luzio)
Mike Singleton (Ireland & Luzio)
Cynthia Smith (Youth Service Bureau)
Ann Hecht (Children & Family Services)
Bill Curtis (Hillcrest Youth Home)

<h3>Meeting Minutes</h3>

Meeting Called to Order at: 5:10 p.m. (6:10 p.m. Indianapolis time) by Regional Manager Virginia Combs.

1. Mrs. Combs welcomed everyone and asked them to introduce themselves. The agenda for today's meeting and the minutes of the April 26th meeting had been emailed to all Council members prior to the meeting. On a motion by Steve Cunningham, seconded by Judge David Kelley, the minutes of the April 26, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

2. Community Partners Update – Mike Singleton gave an update on the Community Partners for Child Safety program. He distributed three handouts: the Monthly Case Summary for June 2007, the Closed Case Summary for January– June 2007, and a newly formatted budget sheet showing operating expenses for the program.

There is now a waiting list for services. Goals are being set by the families in the program. The program is going well and receiving positive feedback. Ireland estimates that they will work with about 40 families per month for the remainder of this year at an average expense of \$500 per family. Some probation referrals have been received, but there are mostly self referrals by families who have been encouraged by others. Mike recently conducted an in-service for CASA volunteers about the program.

3. Practice Reform Update - This week was the first 4-day training session for Region 16 on Teaming and Engaging Families. In the class of thirty, 15 were from Region 16 (mostly Directors and Supervisors). There will be additional training sessions for Region 16 staff in August, September, and October.

Participants will learn how to engage families and their support systems and to work as a team to develop goals and a plan to attain them. The team meetings can be informal, spur of the moment meetings with families when we become initially involved. There will be preparation of everyone before team meetings. Community Partners should become familiar with this process also.

All counties will have a policy for specific points in the case to have a team meeting; such as, returning the child home or change of placements or prior to removal of the child if there is time. But any person who is a part of the team can call a meeting when needed. Notes of meeting have to be kept, typed and distributed to all members of the team. All members should agree to the plan. People at the team meeting are there to help the family reach their goals.

4. Child Welfare Services Funding Update – Vanderburgh County will be the fiscal agent for Region 16 for Child Welfare Services funding. The funds have been received and a process has been set up for Directors to send bills for grants they are funding for their counties.
5. Child Safety Conference Proposal – Judy Harper informed the Council members that Region 16 is planning a child safety conference because of the number of child fatalities in the Region in the last few months. A letter from Lark Buckman who will chair the conference was distributed. Lark is Indianapolis tonight to help honor a Vanderburgh County Family Case Manager, Samantha Freeman,

who is being honored as Case Manager of the year for the state. If you know of someone who would like to assist in any way with the conference, please contact Lark Buckman at Vanderburgh Department of Child Services. A notice will be sent out after the date and details of the conference have been decided.

6. 2007 Legislation – New legislation took effect on July 1st that impacts all of us. Gini Combs asked the Judges to discuss the impact on the courts to implement the changes.

There was much discussion about the new legislation. Highlights included the following:

Judge Tim Crowley from Knox County mentioned that the issue of having the CHINS initial hearing within 7 days of the detention hearing could be a problem as his court is a general jurisdiction court with numerous criminal cases and civil litigation cases. Judge David Kelley of Warrick County stated that they are fortunate that they have been holding both hearings at the same time. They address the initial hearing first in Warrick Court and then go into the detention hearing. Judge James Redwine of Posey County indicated that they have always just had one hearing. Judge Brett Niemeier stated that this change was easy for Vanderburgh County to comply with as they have been already doing this most of the time.

Judge Niemeier asked what the other Judges do about alleged fathers, sending notices and having them appear at the hearings, especially if the father has not had any contact or made any support payments. Judge Redwine indicated that he will ask where the father is if he is not in Court. If the Family Case Manager has made a good faith effort to find the father and he is not in Court, then the Judge proceeds with the hearing. In Posey County, they do not publish for the father in the CHINS phase, but at the time of termination of parental rights. Judge Crowley stated that if they have a way to notify the father they do, but if they have no address, then the child is determined to be a CHINS and they move on.

Judge Niemeier asked if any judges have terminated on only one parent. If one parent is a drug addict and can not get clean, do they terminate parental rights and give the other parent full custody of the child. Judge Crowley responded that in Knox County, they do not terminate on only one parent.

7. Miscellaneous – Judge Brett Niemeier, who recently attended a Drug Court conference in Washington DC, mentioned that it was interesting. Vanderburgh County has both a Juvenile and a CHINS drug court. Typically parents spend six to nine months involved in drug court. If they stay clean for 90 days, their

children can return home. The parents spend eight days in jail if they test positive a second time. Faster resolution in cases has been seen when the parents are involved with Drug Court. Stepping Stone has a liaison person at Drug Court to get the parent connected with help sooner than in the past.

Next Meeting Date, Location and Time: September 27, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. at Haub's Steak House, Haubstadt, Indiana.

Meeting Adjourned at: 6:50 p.m. (7:50 p.m. Indianapolis time).